

Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation Investment Strategies Committee

Final Meeting Summary
Approved October 4, 2000

May 10, 2000

Present: Dale Stedman, Chair, Bill Lampson, Vice-Chair, Ted Bottiger, Bruce Anderson, Don Briscoe, Representative Shirley Hankins, Senator Mary Margaret Haugen, Peter Hurley, Bettie Ingham, Andrew Johnsen, John Kelly, Charles Mott, Patricia Otley

Absent: None

The Committee Chair called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. He asked for any proposed revisions to the summary of the April 12th meeting. Charles Mott noted that in the discussion of WSDOT Rail services on page 6, “a high speed night service” should be changed to “NAFTA and overnight intermodal freight service.” John Kelly suggested that a concluding or clarifying sentence be added to the discussion of organizational categories on page 2. The Committee agreed and approved the summary of the April 12th meeting with two revisions.

The Chair noted that Bruce Anderson of SUPERVALU, Inc. has joined the Investment Strategies Committee.

Public Comment

A representative of West Sound Connection, shared his organization’s objective: to improve transportation, especially freight mobility, in Kitsap County. The West Sound Connection proposes a bridge between East Bremerton and Bainbridge Island, and the relocation of the Bremerton ferry terminal to East Bainbridge Island. He suggested Kitsap County develop a long-term, 20-year plan.

Chuck Shank, a resident of Port Orchard, urged the Committee to look at long term fixes that increase employment and economic activity. Douglas Rauh, a resident of Port Orchard, urged the Committee to use advanced technology to improve the State’s transportation problems.

Washington State Ferries

Terry McCarthy, Deputy Director of Washington State Ferries, reviewed the current Washington State Ferries revenue sources. The ferry system lost a large amount of Motor Vehicle Excise Tax (MVET) funds as a result of the passage of Initiative 695 (I-695). Though the legislature allocated additional funds to compensate for I-695 losses, they address only the current biennium, not future funding. In order to maintain the excess of \$1 billion in assets owned by Washington State Ferries, a mechanism for capitalization is necessary.

McCarthy gave an overview of Washington State Ferries facilities, services, and capital needs. Washington's ferry system is primarily a commuter-oriented service and should be viewed as one element of a system or corridor that moves people and freight. He noted that transit connections at ferry terminals are an important element and should be improved.

McCarthy listed investment needs for Washington State Ferries including the following items.

- **Preservation of terminal facilities.** Though some patch maintenance has occurred, significant and consistent investment on terminals has not. Wooden docks are deteriorating at an alarming rate.
- **Replacement of old boats.** The average age of Washington's fleet is 31 years old, with four boats over 70 years old. In a short period of time those boats will need to be replaced.
- **Additional capacity.** Increased capacity is needed to deal with chokepoints at many facilities such as Fauntleroy, Mukilteo, and Edmonds. Also, the State needs to anticipate increased demand over the next 20 years.

McCarthy briefly discussed fare structures. Effects of substantially increased passenger and vehicle fares include increased carpooling, increased "island cars" (keeping a car on both sides of the water), and decreased discretionary trips.

Commute Trip Reduction

Bryan Lagerberg of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Ted Arbiowski of Avista Corporation gave an overview of Washington's Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) program. The objectives of the CTR program are to increase energy efficiency, improve air quality, and reduce growth in vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT) per capita. He noted that the objective of trip reduction is not necessarily to reduce congestion, but to provide more choices, access, and mobility to citizens.

In 1999, the CTR Program removed 18,500 vehicles from Washington roadways, including 12,600 from the Puget Sound region, every morning. If the 12,600 vehicles removed from the Puget Sound region each morning were added back to the region's highways, the equivalent of 22.5 additional lane miles would be needed to accommodate

the demand. The cost to the State to provide this additional capacity would be somewhere between \$36-169 million.

Lagerberg noted that an important component of the CTR program is the realization by employers of their importance in the transportation system. The CTR program uses incentives such as trip reduction tax credits to help employers provide benefits to employees. Lagerberg noted Simpson Tacoma Kraft Company's highly effective CTR efforts. Simpson Tacoma Kraft Company is located in the Tacoma tideflats, an area not typically considered CTR friendly. The company is located in an industrial park; few employees can walk or bike to work, and transit access is limited. When the CTR Program was instituted in 1993, over 98% of employees drove alone to work. In 1999, only 63% of employees drove alone to work. Simpson Tacoma Kraft Company's success is a good illustration of the significant impact CTR programs can achieve, even in a less than optimal location.

Ted Arbiowski explained the CTR Taskforce. The CTR Taskforce is made up of employers, governments, transit systems, and citizens. The role of the CTR Taskforce is to move the CTR program forward. The CTR Taskforce conducts a number of public meetings and forums, collects input from employers, develops strategies to meet needs and changes, develops incentives such as tax credits, and runs an education campaign efforts.

There are several reasons that employers participate in the CTR program. Most importantly, the Washington State Legislature passed the CTR Law in 1993, incorporating it into the Washington Clean Air Act as RCW 70.94.521-551. The statute requires certain employers to measure their progress against the average vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and single occupant vehicle (SOV) commute trips made by employees at worksites in their area. Another reason for participation is that by encouraging CTR programs, employers are acting as good corporate citizens and stewards of the community. Finally, as part of an overall benefits package, CTR programs attract and retain quality employees.

Flexcar

Neil Peterson, a member of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation's Revenue Committee, gave an overview of a company he recently started called Flexcar. The basic idea behind Flexcar is that customers can use a car only when they need it and pay for it only when they use it. Peterson explained that on average, each driver in the Seattle metropolitan region spends 5% of each day driving, but 25% of their income to own and maintain a car. Flexcar is a timeshare automobile program that allows individuals and businesses to have the benefits of auto use without the high fixed costs of auto ownership.

Flexcar currently has 250 members in the Capitol Hill area of downtown Seattle. Members reserve a car by phone and then pick it up at a convenient location, usually within 1 to 3 blocks of their home or workplace. Though different levels of membership exist, the typical member pays a \$250 initial membership fee, monthly dues of \$20, and

\$2.00 hour and \$0.50/mile when using the car. To use Flexcar you must become a member. The company checks an applicant's credit history, driving record, and insurance record. As a result of this screening process, the company receives favorable insurance rates, which keep the price of membership low. Flexcar handles all insurance, maintenance, and cleaning.

Timeshare automobiles developed in Western Europe where observed effects of the programs have been increased transit ridership, less cars on the roads, trip bundling, and decreased VMT. Because the costs of vehicle use become more visible, drivers use cars less. Flexcar is a private, for-profit company, but received startup capital and marketing assistance from King County METRO.

Freight Mobility

Karen Schmidt, Executive Director of Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB), reviewed the origins and structure of the organization. The charge of the Freight Mobility Office is to speak on behalf of statewide freight mobility needs, and to promote understanding of the importance of freight mobility in Washington State. The office attempts to show citizens how freight mobility (or the lack there of) affects their daily lives. Schmidt listed the activities of FMSIB:

- Obtain input about project selection criteria from all stakeholders;
- Monitor the list of active projects to ensure that they are on time and on budget;
- Assist communities in the development stage of projects;
- Work with groups throughout the state on freight mobility issues;
- Develop necessary local and private sector funding to match contributions made by the State;
- Work with the private sector to determine freight mobility problems, assess costs, assess the private sector's willingness to pay, and develop solutions to problems;
- Develop budget requests and recommend freight mobility projects to the legislature.

Schmidt reviewed project selection criteria and touched on its strengths and weaknesses. She noted that partnerships are a key element of successful freight mobility project selection. Many of the projects categorized as high priority receive funding from multiple sources such as Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), Transportation Investment Board (TIB), and some local jurisdictions. Another approach is to break large (and expensive) projects into phases.

Schmidt summarized Washington's freight mobility needs. State needs are difficult to determine because much data from counties and other jurisdictions are unknown. However, FMSIB used the following sources as a guide: information from the Freight Mobility Advisory Committee, Freight Mobility Project Prioritization Committee (FMPPC), and Eastern Washington's 6-year project list for Eastern Washington. The partnership contribution of FMSIB will be approximately \$100-120 million per biennium and will produce \$400 billion worth of projects over the next 20 years.

The Chair asked Charlie Howard of the Washington State Department of Transportation to distribute a list of the 100 most congested locations on highways of statewide significance, categorized by region. The list included 1998 and 2022 estimates of the number of vehicle hours delay per day incurred at these locations. It was suggested a more accurate illustration of delay would be captured by a calculation of the number of *people* hours delay. It was also suggested the list be categorized by different classifications of regions, such as RTPOs. The Chair noted that this type of list could be useful to the Committee in making more specific recommendations in the future.

Interim Report and Committee Options

Kjristine Lund, project manager for the Commission, reviewed the Committee's work plan and responsibilities in preparation for the Full Commission Retreat on May 18. She also explained the format of the transportation accords and options the Commission will be reviewing at the retreat. Lund talked briefly about what roles the Commissioners will have in upcoming public outreach efforts. Potential outreach efforts include public meetings, moderated internet chat rooms, and editorial boards. The Chair urged Committee members to make an effort to devote additional time in order to respond to speaker requests from both large and small communities.

The Chair reported on the May 9th Steering Committee Meeting at which Governor Locke pledged a strong commitment to embrace and promote the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation's recommendations.

The Chair led the Committee in a discussion of the Draft Investment Strategies Committee Interim Report that staff had prepared. The following summary organizes the comments by the corresponding principle. (The Draft Interim Report was redrafted as a May 11, 2000 document, so the Option numbers, e.g., A1, B1, referenced below don't necessarily correspond to the Options as numbered in the May 11 draft. Subsequently, the May 11 draft was incorporated into the May 18, 2000 Draft Accords and Options for public comment document).

Many Committee members voiced concern with the redundant and confusing nature of the two sets of options: "More Efficient Use" and "20 Year Investments." It was determined that the two sets of options will be combined.

A1

The Commission is currently placing emphasis on a regional approach to transportation improvements. Concern was raised regarding how to measure progress of regions and how to deal with inaction on the part of regions. It was suggested that this topic be included in the "argument against" section of the discussion notes. The Chair noted that both the Benchmark and Administration Committees are dealing with the topic of measurements and standards. Kjristine Lund noted that the Administration Committee has included a set of options regarding the role of the Washington Transportation Commission, which might address this concern.

A2

Combine option A2 and option B2 using the bold language from option A2.

A3

Replace “Existing transportation infrastructure should be maintained at least at a minimum standard throughout the system” with “All existing transportation modes should be maintained at a minimum standard.”

A4

In option A2, the Committee proposes “...a corridor approach to transportation planning and funding to invest in the most effective mix of strategies...” Concern was raised as to whether or not option A4 (pertaining to benefit-cost analysis) should exist as a stand-alone option or be included under A2. The fear was that one might interpret benefit-cost analysis as a substitute, instead of an aid, for the analytical methods proposed in option A2. The Committee determined that this concern is addressed with the phrase “as an aid.” The Chair noted the significance of benefit-cost analysis, adding that it warranted its own option.

Strike the words, “should be multi-jurisdictional and multimodal and.”

A6

Some Committee members were concerned with the ability of lower density areas to conform to such a strict ordinance. Committee members want to send the message that pavement damage resulting from utility cuts needs to be addressed, but Committee members also want to be reasonable. It was determined that language should be included noting flexibility for smaller jurisdictions and in unusual circumstances.

Replace “utility cuts on roads” with “utility cuts on roads *and streets*.”

A7

Replace “Intelligent Transportation System” with “Intelligent Transportation Systems.”

Replace “Traffic Management” with “Traffic & *Incident* Management.”

Insert the following bullet point below intersection modification in the “Traffic & Incident Management” section:

- *roving service patrols*

Include Commercial Vehicle Information Systems and Networks (CVISN) in the discussion of Advanced Traffic Management Systems.

A8

Replace “Incentives such as the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Program” with “Incentives such as *restoring funding for the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Program.*”

Insert an additional bullet point to the list of other strategies:

- *timeshare autos*

Include some or all of the recommendations made in the Trip Commute Reduction presentation earlier in the meeting as a fourth bullet under Traffic Demand Management policies called “Entrepreneurial incentives and other innovative ideas.”

B1

The Committee approved option B1 with the current language.

B2

Combine option A2 and option B2 using the bold language from option A2.

B3

Combine option A3 and option B3 and add a reference to safety.

B4

Insert two bullet points under the Tier 3 Funding Source cell (consistent with Committee discussion captured in April 12 Meeting Summary):

- Regional equity
- Possibly flow from mobility funds

B5

Insert two additional bullet points:

- Eliminate regulatory barriers to pedestrian and transit-friendly development (“smart growth”) while ensuring high environmental and design standards,
- Ensure that major transportation investments are consistent with regional and local Growth Management Act (GMA) land use and transportation plan,

Replace “the inclusion of land use alternatives should become standard practice when conducting Major Investment Studies” with “the inclusion of land use alternatives should become standard practice when conducting *corridor studies.*”

B6

Combine option A6 and option B6.

B7

Combine option A7 and option B7.

B8

Replace “Authorize tolls (congestion pricing)” with “Authorize congestion pricing such as tolls.”

B9

It was noted that Finding #10: “State and local governments do not use all of the best tools available for identifying the most cost-effective investments” is indeed related to option B9, and the language in the discussion section should be changed to reflect this.

Additional Comments

Peter Hurley distributed a handout with some ideas on how the Committee can to put forward more specific investment strategies without creating a project list. He suggested the Committee acquire numbers, ranges of costs for certain policies, performance measures, and assessments of capacity investments. He suggested that the Committee conduct more detailed technical work to determine exactly “What does it mean?” and “How do we do it?” for many of the options

The Committee adjourned at 12:00 p.m.